

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL,
HELD ON TUESDAY, 12TH JULY, 2022 AT 7.30 PM
IN THE PRINCES THEATRE, TOWN HALL, STATION ROAD, CLACTON-ON-SEA,
CO15 1SE**

Present:	Councillors Harris (Chairman), V Guglielmi (Vice-Chairman), Alexander, Allen, Amos, Baker, Barry, Bray, Calver, Casey, Cawthron, Chapman BEM, Chittock, Clifton, Codling, Coley, Davidson, Davis, Fairley, Fowler, Griffiths, C Guglielmi, I Henderson, J Henderson, P Honeywood, S Honeywood, Knowles, Land, McWilliams, Miles, Morrison, Nash, Newton, Placey, Scott, Skeels, Steady, G Stephenson, Stock OBE, Talbot, Turner, White, Wiggins and Winfield
In Attendance:	Lisa Hastings (Deputy Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer), Lee Heley (Corporate Director (Place & Economy)), Richard Barrett (Assistant Director (Finance and IT) & Section 151 Officer), Keith Simmons (Head of Democratic Services and Elections), Ian Ford (Committee Services Manager), William Lodge (Communications Manager), Keith Durran (Committee Services Officer) and Matt Cattermole (Communications Assistant)

16. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Bush, King, Porter and M E Stephenson and also on behalf of the Chief Executive (Ian Davidson).

17. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

It was moved by Councillor Stock OBE, seconded by Councillor G V Guglielmi and:-

RESOLVED that the minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Council held on Tuesday 29 March 2022 and the annual meeting of the Council held on 26 April 2022 be approved as correct records and be signed by the Chairman.

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Fairley declared a Personal Interest in respect of Agenda Item 17 (Urgent Matters for Debate – Motion on Notice under Council Procedure Rule 13(p) regarding National Grid’s East Anglia Green Project) insofar as members of her family owned land in the area that was the subject of National Grid’s proposals. However, having consulted the Council’s Monitoring Officer, she stated that she was not precluded from participating in the consideration of this item.

Councillor Stock OBE also declared a Personal Interest in respect of the aforementioned Agenda Item 17 insofar as he owned land in the area that was the subject of National Grid’s proposals.

Councillors G V Guglielmi and V E Guglielmi both declared a declared a Personal Interest in respect of the aforesaid Agenda Item 17 insofar as they were both members of Lawford Parish Council.

19. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCILVisit to The Guildhall, Harwich

The Chairman reported that, accompanied by the immediate Past Chairman of the Council, Councillor Bray, he had spent a fantastic, informative afternoon at the historic building, The Guildhall in Harwich. He thanked Councillors Calver and Morrison for arranging the visit and sharing their tremendous knowledge of the building's history. He encouraged Members to partake in a tour of the building.

Recent Engagements

The Chairman informed Members that he had been proud to represent the Council at recent commemorative events including those for VE Day, 40th Anniversary of the Falklands War, D-Day and Armed Forces Week at which he had met many veterans' groups. He reminded Council that, in addition to the RNLI, his charitable efforts would include raising money and awareness for veterans' charities as well as signposting help for veterans in the District for those in need of help, for example, those suffering from PTSD.

The Chairman stated that a particular highlight had been the opening of a new mobile home in Weeley provided by UK Homes for Heroes, whose function was to provide homes for homeless veterans and/or those in need of respite. He urged Members to become familiar with the work of this charity.

Platinum Jubilee

The Chairman informed Council that he had been privileged to represent TDC at nine different events held across the District. He congratulated District and Town/Parish Councillors who had been involved in putting on these tremendous and memorable civic occasions.

Tending Veterans and Services Day

The Chairman was pleased and proud to announce that the first ever Tending Veterans and Services Day would be held on Clacton Greensward on Sunday 7 August 2022 from 11.00 a.m. until 5.00 p.m. with participation from veterans groups and charities and the emergency services. He sincerely thanked Officers for arranging this event from scratch in less than two months and he urged all Members to attend if at all possible.

Council noted the foregoing.

20. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

There were no announcements by the Chief Executive on this occasion.

21. STATEMENTS BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCILGold Award for Council in Recognition of Support to Armed Forces Personnel

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Stock OBE) was delighted to inform Members that this Council (TDC) had been given a gold award as part of the Ministry of Defence

Employer Recognition Scheme. This scheme publicly recognised employers' efforts to support defence personnel issues, such as employing reservists and veterans, while encouraging other organisations to do the same.

He reported that TDC had previously held a silver award, bestowed in 2019, but that it had recently improved its offer through a number of means, including changes to its leave policy to support reservists and cadet leaders.

Councillor Amos, TDC's Armed Forces Champion, also made a brief statement to Council on this matter.

Council noted the foregoing.

22. STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

Action on Climate Change Update

The Environment and Public Space Portfolio Holder (Councillor Talbot) made the following statement:-

"Good evening Colleagues,

This is another report intended to inform Members of activity within our respective Council Departments, activity to help meet our Net Climate Zero ambition by 2030.

May I start off this report by quoting Lee Heley in a note to me. Lee had attended a major event, with Climate Change case studies on the agenda, he wrote: "What I took away from the discussions was that the basic rules set in law and guidance from central government are not enough to meet our ambitions to reach net zero – certainly our stretch goal of 2030, and so we are always seeking to try to get ahead of National policy". I thought this a very honest comment from someone with no axe to grind!

Now to Tending:

**We are seeking a consultant to collaborate with us on our Council houses and buildings, designing renewable energy schemes for some of our buildings. Tenders have been received and are being evaluated. A full report containing recommended options for investment will be taken to a Cabinet meeting in the Autumn.*

**Electric Vehicle charging points in our roads, where parking is controlled, are likely to be an Essex C.C. function. I am personally keen to see this facility in our roads approaching the Sea Front areas for the benefit and even encouragement of our holiday visitors. There is no present indication from ECC of action on this. The Council is engaged with ECC and the NEPP to encourage more on-street EV charging provision. One of the most difficult areas of concern with Electric Vehicles will be supporting residents who do not have off road parking, to charge at home. It could be that coupled with the needs of visitors, in both cases the most likely providers of EV charging are the commercial sector – as currently they provide the fuel at petrol stations.*

Off street in car parks is where TDC can help both visitors who require charging before returning home and to assist local residents who do not have off road capability. At present the main govt. grant scheme - ORCS funding (up to 75% of cost to a

maximum of £13,000 per bay) is available to support households without off road capability but is not so readily available to support the special needs of our Tourist / visitor needs. Ian Taylor has secured grant support for EV charging in the proposed new Starlings car park, which is based in an area of terraced properties and without off road provision. The Council had the opportunity to purchase new equipment for the new car park. These last two situations helped the secure the grants success. It might be that we eventually seek a partnership with the commercial sector via a variety of Charge Point Operators, but these companies still often require 15-year contracts – something that most local authorities are rightly cautious about, particularly in such a changeable market as this.

**Our Planners, promised in an earlier Climate Change statement to encourage any developer to add facilities, such as EV charging points, Solar roof panels, increased insulation of buildings etc. to their plans, prior to formal consideration. Their promises have come to fruition. The Planning Committee have been using some standard conditions attached to planning applications around EV charging (for all new development) and energy efficiency (for major applications). These are supported by Policies SPL3 and PPL10 of the new Local Plan.*

EV charging (is now a requirement for all new development). A policy of 20% renewables (applies to all new housing development): This means that a scheme detailing how a minimum saving of 20% of the energy needs generated by the development can be achieved through renewable energy source, and I am informed that a 'A Climate Change Special Planning Document' is under development by the Planning Policy Team, which I will report on in due course.

**Last Tuesday the Staff Climate Change Network had its first lunch time learning session during which they received a presentation from the PACE group based in Manningtree, the Group that organised the successful Earth Festival. Discussion on Climate Change and action to reduce carbon emissions in Tendring was the purpose of the meeting.*

**Our CEO Ian Davidson report to Members on 4th July, informing us that he had attended that day the Essex Climate Change Commission, looking at various initiatives around the County. He finished with an observation, which I think we must bear in mind when considering some sort of association with the number of bodies that seek our support and an association with them. I quote Ian: "I have to say that some attendees were there to use Climate Change as a tool to fight other battles."*

**I report here at each Council Meeting, about Tendring's high ambition to be 'nett Carbon Zero' by the end of this decade. But there is much going on in the Country as a whole and I thought a very brief report on one national matter, that eventually will concern all citizens and all members, may be of interest, as each of us go about our daily business.*

When all motor vehicles cease to use Petrol and Diesel the Government will lose around £29 Billion in revenue from motorists. The main proposals being considered are to charge drivers to use the road, with some form of a tachometer charging each vehicle for every mile travelled, to replace lost fuel duty and VED in the switch to electric vehicles.

On the 15th of June, the LGA invited elected Council Members to a web meeting to discuss how 'Road Pricing' could be introduced to compensate the Treasury for the loss of tax revenue, with consideration being given to a 'National' delivery of a scheme, and the introduction alongside the 'National' scheme, of a 'Local' road charging scheme, for essentially local road matters. (Sounds to me a bit like a bribe to get LA's support)."

Councillor Talbot then responded to questions raised on his statement by Councillors Scott, I J Henderson, Miles, Allen and Clifton.

23. PETITIONS TO COUNCIL

No Petitions had been submitted in accordance with the Scheme approved by the Council on this occasion.

24. QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.1

Subject to the required notice being given, members of the public could ask questions of the Leader of the Council, Portfolio Holders or Chairmen of Committees.

One question had been received, on notice, from a member of the public on this occasion.

Question

Jan Vincent asked the Chairman of the Planning Committee, Councillor John White:-

"Will TDC issue a Section 215 TCPA for Bel-Air Chalet Estate, St. Osyth Beach, to make safe the extremely dangerous roads on the Holiday Park which are unusable by wheelchair users and hazardous to public and holiday makers?"

The roads are hidden dangers at night as all street lighting has been disconnected. The danger is compounded and hidden after rainfall as the potholes become filled with rainwater which is slow to drain as TDC Planning gave permission years ago for the natural drainage dykes to be filled in without any inspection of the works done. The potholes are so deep a person or child could drown if they fell into a pothole and were rendered unconscious in the fall. There are no pavements to avoid the danger. Two Ambulances got stuck in the roads last year causing danger to life by delay of medical treatment."

Councillor White replied to that question as follows:-

"Thank you, Chairman and thank you Ms Vincent for the Question.

I am aware that you met the Chief Executive and that more recently you had a meeting with the Corporate Director for Operations and Delivery, together with our Assistant Director for Planning, to discuss a variety of issues and concerns about the Bel-Air Estate. This is soon to be followed, by a further meeting with you on site which hopefully will include the Police. The Council is keen to work across its services and in partnership with other agencies to tackle the range of issues that have been identified. It is keen to employ the relevant powers available and most appropriate.

With regards to the use of Section 215 Notices to tackle the particular problems described about the condition of roads at Bel-Air, I am advised that this would not be an appropriate means by which to take action having regard to the purpose of Section 215 Notices under the legislation and the grounds upon which a landowner could appeal against such a Notice. I have asked the Assistant Director for Planning to provide you with the full and technical reasoning for that in writing.

The disconnection of the lighting does not constitute an issue of poor maintenance for which Section 215 Notices are designed to tackle. The potholes affect a private road within the Chalet Estate, is not adopted and is not otherwise available to the general public. Because the amenity enjoyed by the wider public and neighbours is not affected by the condition of the internal road, a Section 215 Notice is not appropriate in this instance.

However, our Officers are exploring other means by which these issues could be addressed and how best the owners can be engaged in sensible discussions about the proper maintenance of their site.

In your question you mentioned that two ambulances got stuck in the roads last year. My understanding is that this was in the estate approach Seaview Road, also an unadopted road. Here the responsibility of the road repairs is in the hands of the adjacent property owners with their Riparian rights and that comes under a completely different legislation namely Section 230 of the Highways Act 1980.”

25. REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL - A.1 - URGENT CABINET OR PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISIONS

In accordance with the requirements of Rule 16.2 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules and Rule 18(i) of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, Council received a report from the Leader of the Council which notified Members of any recent Executive Decision(s) taken in the circumstances set out in Rule 15 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules and/or Rule 18(i) of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules and/or Rule 6(b) of the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules.

(1) Discretionary Council Tax Energy Rebate Scheme

It was reported that, on 10 May 2022, the Corporate Finance & Governance Portfolio Holder (Councillor G V Guglielmi) and the Housing Portfolio Holder (Councillor P B Honeywood), in view of the urgency of the issue concerned, and in accordance with Rule 15 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules, had sought and subsequently obtained the Chairman of the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee's (Councillor M E Stephenson) consent that the Corporate Finance & Governance Portfolio Holder's and Housing Portfolio Holder's joint decision relating to the adoption of a discretionary Council Tax energy rebate scheme could be taken under the Council's "Special Urgency" procedure.

The Corporate Finance & Governance Portfolio Holder's and Housing Portfolio Holder's joint decision had been as follows:-

- (1) *“That a Discretionary Council Tax Energy Rebate Scheme be approved and adopted by Tendring District Council;*

-
- (2) *That the Assistant Director (Finance & IT), be authorised under existing officer delegations, as set out in the Scheme of Delegation to determine:*
- a) *the final 'top up' payments to those households in properties with a council tax band of A to D and in receipt of LCTS to fully utilise the associated funding made available by the Government.*
 - b) *any other technical changes required to implement and administer the scheme to reflect any emerging Government guidance as necessary; and*
- (3) *That any payments made to households under both the mandatory and discretionary are disregarded for the purpose of calculating entitlement to LCTS as a potential interim approach until further Government guidance is made available."*

It had been felt that any delay likely to be caused by the usual key decision forward plan process would have seriously prejudiced the Council's and the public's interest for the following reasons:-

"There would be a potential delay in households being able to access a council tax energy rebate payment under the associated discretionary scheme along with opportunities that could be missed by overlapping the administration of the discretionary scheme with the roll-out of the mandatory scheme."

(2) North Essex Parking Partnership Joint Committee Agreement

Council was informed that, on 30 June 2022, the Deputy Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer (Lisa Hastings), acting on behalf of the Leader of the Council (Councillor Stock OBE), in view of the urgency of the issue concerned, and in accordance with Rule 15 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules and Rule 18(i) of the Overview & Scrutiny Procedure Rules, had sought and subsequently obtained the Chairman of the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee's (Councillor M E Stephenson) consent that the Leader of the Council's decision relating to the renewal of the North Essex Parking Partnership Joint Committee agreement could be taken under the Council's "Special Urgency" procedure and that it would also be exempted from the call-in procedure.

The Leader of the Council's decision was as follows:-

"To renew the Council's participation in the North Essex Parking Partnership Joint Committee agreement."

It was felt at that time that any delay likely to be caused by the usual key decision forward plan process would have seriously prejudiced the Council's and the public's interest for the following reasons:-

"Unfortunately, this Council (TDC) was placed in a situation whereby it had become necessary for the Leader to exercise his power to make an urgent decision for the benefit of the Council. The North Essex Parking Partnership Joint Committee agreement expired at midnight on 30 June 2022. The intention was to take this matter to Cabinet on 15th July 2022 for approval for the new agreement, which had only just been received, however TDC had been in various conversations with Essex County Council (ECC) on 30 June 2022 and had two choices, either to take an urgent decision

and complete on that day or not to be part of the Joint Committee and Partnership and request to join after the event, which for the Council's reputation would not have been ideal. The Leader had sought assurances from ECC that this Council would not be in any adverse financial position under the terms of the new agreement and this had been provided."

Council noted the foregoing.

26. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

It was moved by Councillor Stock OBE and:-

RESOLVED that the minutes of the following Committees, as circulated, be received and noted:-

- (a) Resources and Services Overview & Scrutiny of Monday 14 March 2022;
- (b) Community Leadership Overview & Scrutiny of Monday 21 March 2022;
- (c) Audit of Thursday 31 March 2022;
- (d) Standards of Wednesday 6 April 2022;
- (e) Audit of Monday 25 April 2022;
- (f) Community Leadership Overview & Scrutiny of Monday 9 May 2022;
- (g) Planning Policy & Local Plan Committee of Wednesday 11 May 2022;
- (h) Resources and Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Tuesday 24 May 2022;
and
- (i) Planning Policy & Local Plan Committee of Tuesday 31 May 2022.

27. MOTIONS TO COUNCIL PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12

No motions, on notice, had been submitted pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 12 from members of the Council on this occasion.

28. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET

No recommendations from the Cabinet had been submitted for Council's consideration and determination on this occasion.

29. REPORTS SUBMITTED TO THE COUNCIL BY AN OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - REFERENCE FROM THE COUNCIL'S TWO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES - A.2 - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES: PROPOSED WORK PROGRAMMES FOR 2022/2023 AND A REVIEW OF THE WORK CARRIED OUT DURING 2021/2022

Council considered the respective proposed work programmes for the Community Leadership and the Resources & Services Overview and Scrutiny Committees for the

remainder of 2022/23. Council also received the proposed 'Annual Report 2021/22' for overview and scrutiny work undertaken through those Committees.

Members were aware that, under the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, the Constitution stated, in relation to the Work Programme (Rule 7), that:

"Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee will submit a work programme for the year ahead and a review of the previous year's activities to the Council for approval. In addition, it will be responsible for coordinating and prioritising its work programme on an ongoing basis.

In submitting their proposed work programmes for 2022/23, the Overview and Scrutiny Committees had taken into account:-

- *the General Role and Principles of undertaking its functions, as set out in Part 2, Article 6*
- *the planned work on the preparation of elements of the Budget and Policy Framework, as set out in the Council's Business Plan;*
- *the need for statutory timetables to be met;*
- *the wishes of all members of the committee;*
- *requests from the Cabinet to carry out reviews; and*
- *requests from Group Leaders in accordance with Rule 8.*

In addition, under Article 6.02 of the Constitution the separate Overview & Scrutiny Committees (OSCs) performed the role of overview and scrutiny in relation to:-

Resources and Services OSC

"the effective use of the Council's resources including approval of discrete researched and evidenced reviews on the effectiveness of:

- *Financial Forecast and Budget setting and monitoring (including the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account)*
- *Service Delivery and Performance (where not delegated to the Community Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee)*
- *Procurement and Contract Management*
- *Transformation and Digital Strategies*
- *Customer Service and Standards"*

Community Leadership OSC

- *Community Leadership - developing the external focus of overview and scrutiny on 'district-wide issues' (and where appropriate sub-regional, regional and national issues), in particular through collaborative work with local partner authorities, providers, stakeholders and members of the public.*
- *Approval of discrete researched and evidenced reviews on the effectiveness of partnership operating in the area with particular focus on:*
 - *Community Safety*
 - *Health and Well-being*
 - *Economy, Skills and Educational Attainment*
 - *Community engagement, development and empowerment*
 - *Leisure and Tourism (except matters relating to budgets)*

- *Housing Strategy and Homeless Service (except the Housing Revenue Account)*
- *Emergency Planning*

In considering the Work Programme of enquiries to submit for approval to Council, the separate Overview and Scrutiny Committees had had regard to the Corporate Plan 2020-24 and the themes of that Corporate Plan. Those themes were:

- Delivering High Quality Services;
- Building Sustainable Communities;
- Strong Finances and Governance;
- A Growing and Inclusive Economy; and
- Community Leadership through Partnerships.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committees had each formally reviewed the work carried out in 2021/22 and had considered items for inclusion in their respective proposed Work Programmes for 2022/23 as follows:

Community Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 28 June 2022; and
Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 30 June 2022.

This formal approval had followed consultation with Councillors, Officers, external partners, Parish Councils and the public. In total, 22 proposals had been received in response, one was from a Parish Council, three were from this Council's own staff, five had been submitted by TDC Councillors and 13 had been from the public. Those responses had been assigned to the separate Overview and Scrutiny Committees based on their respective terms of reference and had been reported to the Committee meetings identified above.

It was reported that both Committees had also received a report on a meeting between the Chairmen of those Committees, the Leader of the Council, the Deputy Leader, the Chief Executive, the Deputy Chief Executive and the Head of Democratic Services & Elections held on 17 May 2022. A number of suggested possible enquiries had been identified at that meeting.

Having considered all of the above, the two Overview and Scrutiny Committees had determined their Work Programmes for 2022/23 and those were now submitted for approval by Council along with a review of the scrutiny function at the Council in 2021/22 as performed through the two Committees. This had been developed in dialogue with the Chairmen of the two Committees and a draft had been submitted at the Committee meetings already referenced above. The Committees had authorised finalisation of the report in consultation with their respective Chairmen.

Appendix Ai to the report before Council set out the proposed work programme for the Community Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Appendix Aii set out the proposed work programme for the Resources and Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Appendix B set out the review of the scrutiny function in 2021/22. All were now for consideration by Council.

Council was made aware that both of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees had agreed to meet again following this meeting of Council to consider further the delivery of the Work Programmes as approved by Council. The Community Leadership Overview & Scrutiny Committee had specifically indicated that it would further review the

suggestions for work programme themes and prioritise any further enquiries to be undertaken in 2022/23.

It was moved by Councillor Chittock and:-

RESOLVED that Council –

- (a) approves the proposed work programmes for the Community Leadership and the Resources & Services Overview and Scrutiny Committees for the 2022/23 Municipal Year, as set out in Appendices Ai and Aii to item A.2 of the joint Reference from the Community Leadership and Resources & Services Overview & Scrutiny Committees respectively; and
- (b) notes the work carried out by those Committees in the year 2021/22, as set out in Appendix B to the aforementioned joint reference report.

30. REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE - A.3 - MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

The Chief Executive formally reported that, in accordance with the wishes of the Leader of the Conservative Group and the authority delegated to him, the following appointments had been duly made since the Annual Meeting of the Council, namely:-

Audit Committee

Councillor Fairley had been appointed to serve in place of Councillor Nash.

Human Resources & Council Tax Committee

Councillor S A Honeywood had been appointed to serve in place of Councillor Chittock.

Planning Committee

Councillor V E Guglielmi had been appointed to serve in place of Councillor Bray.

Planning Policy & Local Plan Committee

Councillor Chittock had been appointed to serve in place of Councillor S A Honeywood.

Resources and Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Skeels had been appointed to serve in place of Councillor Fairley.

Council noted the foregoing.

31. QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 11.2

Subject to the required notice being given, Members of the Council could ask questions of the Chairman of the Council, the Leader of the Council, Portfolio Holders or Chairmen of Committees.

Three questions on notice had been submitted by Members on this occasion as set out below:-

Question One

Councillor Alan Coley asked Councillor Michael Talbot, the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Public Space:

“This Council has made a firm commitment to reducing carbon emissions and thereby reducing Greenhouse Gases and improving Air Quality in our District.

I am sure, we all welcome the return of TDC supported events such as the Car Rally, the Airshow, and the Tendring Show etc.

So that the Council cannot be accused of conspiracy in ‘Greenwashing’, can the Portfolio Holder provide details of what meaningful Carbon Off-Set mitigations the Organisers and Service Suppliers of these events have committed to, and in particular, where those offsets will be found?”

The Environment & Public Space Portfolio Holder replied as follows:-

“Thank you, Councillor Coley, for your question. I share your positive comments about the return of a full Clacton Airshow this year, together with the Harwich Illuminate Festival, Corbea Seats Rally Tendring and Clacton, the hugely successful Tour Series and all the other quality events planned in Tendring this year. They have a huge benefit to our local economy, and I am delighted to see them back on the calendar.

I am pleased to say that the Council has an ongoing tree planting scheme which offsets the carbon footprint of the Clacton Airshow. That results in around 300-400 trees being planted every year. This autumn that will include an additional one hundred trees as part of the Clacton 150 celebrations and further details will be made available in the next few months. Further to this, the organisers of the Rally are also planning a tree planting scheme as mitigation for their event.

The above is the official answer Alan, but the matter is so important in our overall Climate Change objectives in Tendring, that to show potential critics, that ‘Off-Setting’ is not just an easy excuse to allow such events to take place with a clear conscience, I will pursue more definite information about promised off-setting action by both ourselves and others involved in these activities in Tendring, as such action emerges over the period ahead.”

Councillor Coley then asked a question of clarification to which Councillor Talbot then responded.

Question Two

Councillor Ivan Henderson asked Councillor Neil Stock OBE, the Leader of the Council:

“In the Leader of the Council’s Budget speech he confirmed that his administration was adopting a policy of voting against all budget amendments but that any such amendments would then be considered through the new Corporate Investment Plan.

One such amendment, tabled by me on behalf of the Labour Group, sought to utilise £144,000 of the existing Tendring Community Fund to allow each Member to make

available £3,000 of support funding to local charities and organisations assisting vulnerable residents through the cost of living crisis.

The Leader instructed his administration to vote down this much needed amendment that would offer vital, targeted support to those experiencing genuine hardship within our District. Will he please inform Members as to when he is going to make good on his promise to bring this budget amendment before the board overseeing the Capital Investment Plan?"

The Leader of the Council replied as follows:-

"I would like to thank Councillor Henderson for his question and in particular for raising the issue of the cost of living. We all recognise that this is something that every resident in Tendring is experiencing, whether it is the cost of heating at home, food bills in the local supermarket, or the cost of petrol and diesel at the pumps. Costs are going up and are expected to keep going up for some time to come.

It is also worth correcting the perception given that we simply voted down the amendment as that completely ignores the very important and financially prudent point that I made on the night; we should not be taking amendments to the budget on the night that have not been through the rigorous scrutiny and decision-making process of the rest of the budget – they need to be considered against the Council's overall financial position and take account of all the other challenges we face. Ideas put forward on the night may be perfectly reasonable, but they have to be judged and prioritised within a much wider financial context, which I am sure everyone will agree is the sensible and pragmatic approach to take. That is what the Corporate Investment Plan is designed to do. Members may have had the chance to read the Financial Outturn Report that Cabinet will be considering on Friday, which starts to highlight some of the significant challenges that lie ahead. This provides a timely reminder of the need to manage our finances as carefully as possible in 2022/23 and beyond.

Within the same outturn report, the availability of £850k from the New Burdens COVID 19 Grant we received from the Government is highlighted. As I have said before, I would like to see this money help the district recover from the COVID 19 pandemic, which includes the cost-of-living issues that our residents are faced with. I am happy to reconfirm this commitment tonight and I have asked Officers to explore a range of further options that we can consider as part of the next iteration of the Corporate Investment Plan that Cabinet will be considering in September. The scheme put forward by Councillor Henderson remains on the Corporate Investment Plan and it will need to be considered against a number of options available to support our residents.

Although subject to further development by Officers, I would like to see how we can use the funding I have just mentioned to extend the Tendring Community Fund with the costs of living issues in mind, along with revisiting the potential to introduce a lottery within the district. This could provide a long-term legacy from the funding made available by the Government and a way to support local groups on an on-going basis.

I would also like to see Officers explore how we could support the cost of solar panels to reduce the cost of heating for all residents in Tendring. This could also include how solar panels could help reduce the cost of energy for the council and reduce carbon emissions.

I would like to thank Councillor Henderson again for highlighting this crucial topic, and I would like to ask for his and all members support in developing further options to support our residents through the current increases in the cost of living.”

Councillor Henderson then asked a question of clarification to which Councillor Stock OBE responded.

Question Three

Councillor Mick Barry asked Councillor Neil Stock OBE, the Leader of the Council:

“At a meeting of full Council on 15th February 2022 I proposed an amendment to the underlying base budgets for 2022/23 calling for re-instatement of the budgets for Brightlingsea and Harwich Sports Centres which had been withdrawn.

The amendment was lost and the Leader, in speaking against the amendment, said: ‘We have not taken a decision to close any sports facilities.’ He went on to say that he was ‘happy to guarantee as Leader that these facilities will stay open.’

The reality is that in Brightlingsea the Sports Centre has now got very limited opening times with early weekday closures and no weekend opening. Community access has shrunk from nearly 70 hrs per week to less than 15 and the expectation is that it will be fully closed during the six weeks school holiday.

Does the Leader feel that his guarantee given in February has been kept in respect of the sports facilities at Brightlingsea?”

The Leader of the Council replied as follows:-

“I am disappointed that you have misquoted me so egregiously. At no point have I made any guarantee that the facilities will stay open. I could not make such a promise as the Sports Centre is not a facility over which this Council has any control or authority. It belongs to the school, and the school is owned and run by the Sigma Trust.

What I did say, which is entirely different, is that I would do all I can to ensure that the facility remains open, and as you yourself acknowledge that has been achieved.

I am advised that the Sigma Trust, as the owners of the Colne Academy, do intend to close the buildings during the summer holidays, this I understand, is primarily because they have building improvement works underway as part of their ongoing and wider investment in the school, which will require the centre to close while works are carried out. It is of course entirely sensible and usual for a school to do this in the summer holidays.

The opening hours have changed but the Centre remains open when the majority of clubs want to book it out. The benefit of the facility comes from its use rather than its opening hours, and I understand that around 50 bookings have been using the centre regularly, so it still acts as a hub of sporting activity in Brightlingsea.”

Councillor Barry asked a question of clarification to which Councillor Stock OBE responded.

32. URGENT MATTERS FOR DEBATE

Earlier on in the meeting (Minute 18 above refers) and for the reasons reported therein, Councillors Fairley, Stock OBE, G V Guglielmi and V E Guglielmi had each declared a Personal Interest in the subject matter of this item as reported below.

The Chairman informed Council that, pursuant to the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 13(p), he had agreed to allow the consideration of an urgent Motion on Notice. That Motion, the text of which had been circulated to all Members of the Council in advance of the date of the meeting, had been submitted by Councillor Stock OBE and read as follows:-

“National Grid’s East Anglia Green Project, proposes an energy transmission route consisting of the construction of 180km of 50m tall pylons carrying 400kV cables through the entire central length of our County (as well as through our neighbours, Norfolk and Suffolk), save for a section of undergrounding at Dedham Vale.

This Council has already expressed declared a climate emergency and an ambition to be net zero by 2050 so plans for renewable wind farms off the East Anglian coast are welcomed. However, this Council has serious concerns about the nature and short-period of consultation, the route, and how carbon-heavy the proposed scheme of overhead pylons are which rely on 100 year-old technology.

Furthermore, this Council believes that:

- There has been insufficient consideration of alternative approaches which would allow for the required infrastructure but without the sheer scale of the damage to the environment, landscape and the difficulties of this project going ahead, all at the same time as multiple large-scale infrastructure projects which have the potential to cause major disruption across the East of England.*
- New offshore generated electricity should be transmitted offshore, which is why an offshore grid is needed. This is firmly in the interests of both residents and business, offshore windfarms themselves and wider interests e.g. Freeport East. Such an alternative approach would future-proof the network and could avoid all the physical constraints of an above or below-ground solution, retain ease of access for ongoing maintenance and provide a more direct point of connection for any current or future off-shore wind farms.*
- This pylon infrastructure is neither wanted nor needed considering the viable option of undersea power cables. These cables could transport power to where it is needed, helping future proof energy supplies and boost energy security, without adversely impacting on residents, businesses and communities across Essex.*

This Council therefore calls upon:

- Both the Government and National Grid to refocus the East Anglia Green Proposals on an offshore solution and engage in meaningful discussions with Essex and its neighbouring County Councils to achieve this.*

National Grid to:

- Provide this Council with all the information asked for in our response of 16 June by 30 August 2022.*

- *Make publicly available full, open and transparent information on all options, including offshore and undergrounding, to enable evaluation and comparisons to be made by Essex residents, businesses, Councils and other stakeholders. This information to be publicly available for a period of at least 6 months before any Development Control Order (DCO) application is made.”*

Councillor Stock OBE formally moved the Motion, which was then seconded by Councillor G V Guglielmi.

Councillor Stock explained the purpose of the Motion which was for this Council, on behalf of the residents of Tendring, and together with fellow Essex Councils, to make it very clear to both the Government and National Grid (NG) that there were grave concerns about the nature and short duration of NG's consultation, the proposed route (and the sheer scale of its damage to the landscape of East Anglia), and the proposed scheme of overhead pylons reliant as they are on a 100 year-old carbon-heavy technology. Furthermore, this Council, on a strategic level, should be advocating that new offshore generated electricity should be transmitted offshore, which was why an offshore grid employing the viable option of undersea power cables was needed. This would be firmly in the interests of both residents and business, offshore windfarms themselves and wider interests e.g. Freeport East. Such an alternative approach would future-proof the network and could avoid all the physical constraints of an above or below-ground solution, retain ease of access for ongoing maintenance and provide a more direct point of connection for any current or future off-shore wind farms and boosting energy security.

Councillors G V Guglielmi, Baker, Scott, Allen, Fairley, White and Bray addressed the Council during the course of the debate on Councillor Stock OBE's Motion.

On being put to the vote Councillor Stock OBE's Motion was declared unanimously **CARRIED**.

33. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was moved by Councillor Stock OBE, seconded by Councillor G V Guglielmi and:-

RESOLVED that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Agenda Item 18 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A, as amended, of the Act.

34. EXEMPT MINUTE OF THE MEETING OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 31 MARCH 2022

It was moved by Councillor Stock OBE, seconded by Councillor G V Guglielmi and:-

RESOLVED that the Exempt Minute of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on Thursday 31 March 2022, as circulated, be received and noted.

The Meeting was declared closed at 9.08 pm

Chairman